

## TWO SCHOOL FARMS.

The Countess of Warwick's and  
That of Mrs. Henry Parsons.

The Countess of Warwick undoubtedly has no intention of teaching her country women to become savages, but she is training some of her pink cheeked spinster sisters in the arts of the Indian squaw. At a school which she established at Reading, England, two years ago, she is instructing them how to plant and rear corn and beans. That is just what the obedient red

point, Mrs. Henry Parsons conceived the idea of opening a school farm to absorb the energies of the "gangs" of boys and the girls of the neighborhood, teach them something about nature, and train them to take care of the park when it was completed. The public knows little how much it costs the city to repair the damage done in the parks by malicious and ignorant persons. Thousands of dollars are spent annually to repair the damage done to a hedge in one of the parks, it is said. People pull up plants, pluck at hedges and take flowers. Mrs. Parsons is endeavoring to teach the children that DeWitt Clinton Park is "our park" and how to take care of it. The farm has flourished

ground the children are anxious to see what will happen next. The story is told of one girl who was obliged to get up at 4:30 a. m. It was discovered that she was in the habit of visiting her "farm" every day at that hour in order to see what had happened in the course of the night.

Each one is obliged to keep a diary of the progress of his or her garden. Each day that they work they are expected to put down in a blank book bearing the number of their plot what they have done. All over the farm one may see children squatting in the paths beside their "farms," where they may secure "local color" and inspiration, writing down their ac-

bles and weeds. Some pull up the vegetables and leave the weeds. The product of one of the plots and its effect on the girl who cultivated it reminds one of Hawthorne's story of a peculiar plant and its effect on those who came in its neighborhood. The vegetables would not thrive on the plot. The only thing which would grow was a poisonous plant. This grew luxuriantly, absorbing all the nutriment from the soil of the plot. It bore an attractive blossom. The girl became attached to the dangerous bloom. She begged that the plant might be permitted to grow. She wished to care for it. Permission was finally given with the understanding that she would not touch it.

One of the unexpected discoveries made by the attendants is that the children who look as if they had been numbered among the "great unwashed" for several weeks are the most sensitive about dabbling in the soil. Apparently their theory is that to wash is to confess to being dirty. Being unwashed they are clean is their theory. As they don't wish to be included in the category of the dirty they hesitate to delve in the earth because it would entail washing of the hands. Those who are the cleanest hesitate the least to dig into the soil with their fingers.

It is Mrs. Parsons's intention to make the park a centre for nature study for at least the portion of the city about it. With this in mind many kinds of weeds and plants of other sorts are permitted to grow in the observation beds surrounding the edge of the farm. They are conveniently located for the persons of the neighborhood to see them by looking over the fences. In these beds are pumpkins, tomatoes, potatoes, lettuce, gourds, spinach, cabbage, kohlrabi, turnips, peanuts, sunflowers, oats, two or three kinds of wheat, barley, rye, red, crimson and white clover, alsike, muskmelons and a group of weeds. Many of those who see these have never before seen what the vegetables they buy of the hucksters look like when growing. From these plants material will be furnished to the teachers in the public schools for use in their class work. Many flowers for distribution in pots will also be grown on the farm. Underneath the pergola which is being built by the city on the west side of the farm are rooms for the storage of the implements used in working it, and a demonstration room for talks on nature. The latter room will be equipped with a nature library.

The results of the operation of the school farm have been interesting. "Law and order" are the watchwords within the bounds of the farm. Having interested the leaders of the neighborhood gangs in the project no one ever disturbs it at night. Ripe strawberries may tempt, but no one succumbs when passing the



THE FARM SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AT DE WITT CLINTON PARK, NEW-YORK CITY.

In these plots the children of the middle West Side tenement district grow vegetables and learn about nature at the same time.

skinned woman used to do centuries ago. There is a difference in the reason for and the method of doing it, however. The Indian did it because she was not independent. The English women are doing it in order that they may be independent. The squaw did not bother much about changing her dress when she went about her planting. The laws of the nations did not prescribe any particular costume. There was no "fuss and feathers" about it. White aprons over stout dresses are the proper thing when one goes out on the farm at Reading to dig and hoe. The poor Indian squaw would quickly have thrown away the much esteemed shell and ground stone hoes for the modern hoes, spades and forks used by the women of Reading.

Lady Warwick's scheme of a farm school for women is an attempt to solve the problem of homeless, unmarried women who must earn their living. She wants to keep as many of them as possible in the country, away from the fight for positions as typewriters, clerks, governesses and secretaries, and the low salaries and relatively high expenses of the city. She would like to do her part toward decreasing the number of "Deserted Villages." So, at the Lady Warwick Hostel, at Reading, she has been conducting a school for the training of women to become gardeners, dairy workers, etc. Her students are taught the theoretical as well as the practical side of the growing of flowers and vegetables, the production of milk and the making of butter and cheese. They attend lectures on soils, agricultural chemistry and kindred subjects in the agricultural department of the University Extension College at Reading. The work done at the school includes all that pertains to the kitchen garden, greenhouses, hotbeds and the flower garden. Lady Warwick contemplates that her "Mistress Marys" will be especially adapted to take charge of certain departments of estates managed by women, and of convalescent homes and convents. There are posts as dairy teachers under the City Council and as managers of private dairies open to them. One of the students has taken charge of a dairy of sixty cows and eleven others have found positions.

The idea of grouping a number of the spinster gardeners in a settlement of small cottages is another of Lady Warwick's projects. They would raise flowers, fruits, vegetables, butter, eggs and poultry, and market them on the co-operative plan.

In New-York is a farm school also. It is for what some might term the "little Indians" of the tenement district about DeWitt Clinton Park. This park lies between 11th and 12th aves. and 52d and 54th sts.

When the city decided to lay out a recreation park, fronting on the Hudson River, at this



THE FARM SCHOOL FOR ENGLISH SPINSTERS AT READING.

The Countess of Warwick has established this school for the training of portionless women to take charge of certain classes of farm work.

and is to be a permanent feature of the new park.

Contained within the oval iron fence which surrounds the farm plot are 360 tiny rectangles of earth, each a child's "farm." Each is planted exactly alike. Some are in better condition than others for just the same reason that some country farms are better than others—they are more systematically cultivated. In the centre of each bed, waving in the sunshine like a Flag of Freedom, are the fresh green blades of two stalks of corn. Around them the pale green needles of the onion, the feathery foliage of the beet, the red streaked leaf of the carrot, and the fresh green shoots of the radish indicate what some of the contents of the "farms" are. Just now the farmers are gathering crisp, red skinned radishes.

Apparently the children take great interest in the "farms," for there is a waiting list of two hundred and fifty. Curiosity plays a prominent part in the successful cultivation of the plots. From the moment the seeds are deposited in the

compliments for the day and something about the condition of their crops. This practice revealed one boy's need and opened a doorway to learning for him.

He was an odd looking little chap, and not at all prepossessing. He was nine years old, he said. His clothing was made up of odds and ends. His hair persisted in turning upward behind instead of growing downward, as in the case of most boys. One of his eyes looked "bad," perhaps was sightless. In appearance he reminded one of a homeless cat. One day he went to the teacher with the blank book which had been given to him.

"How do you do this?" he said. "I don't know how to read or write."

Investigation showed that no one had made any effort to get him into school. He was started three weeks ago and rejoices in the hope of soon being able to jot down something about his "farm."

As might be expected, the amateur gardeners sometimes do not discriminate between vegeta-

bles, even if no observer is looking. Two children have been cured of tuberculosis by their work on the farm.

## THE ATTENDANT'S JOKE.

An American, recently returned from Europe, described a dinner party at San Remo where William Dean Howells had been the guest of honor.

"Mr. Howells asked us if we had never wondered at the memory of those attendants in the cloakrooms of fashionable restaurants, who, without the use of checks or numbers, keep and restore to us infallibly our hats and wraps."

"Mr. Howells, with a smile, went on to say that after dining one evening at a restaurant in New-York he was much impressed with the assurance with which the cloakroom man picked out his hat from a hundred others that resembled it."

"How did you know that was my hat?" Mr. Howells asked.

"I didn't know, sir," the man answered.

"Then," said Mr. Howells, "why did you give it to me?"

"Because, sir, you gave it to me," said the cloakroom man.